

The Conservation Reserve Program 26th Signup



August 2003

Acknowledgments

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Further information on the Conservation Reserve Program is available from the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, STOP 0513, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-0513 or from FSA's CRP web page at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation>.

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THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20250-0100

Results-Oriented, Community-Based Conservation

First established by the Congress in 1985, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has become the nation's premier program for protecting fragile natural resources and enhancing the environment for all of rural America.

With today's announcement, two million acres of environmentally sensitive and fragile lands will be placed into grass and trees that will improve the soil, water, air, and wildlife resources of our Nation. CRP provides income to producers who voluntarily practice sound resource stewardship on these lands.

Society benefits through improved water quality, safer drinking water supplies, enhanced wildlife, improved air quality, and improved soil resources. Enrollment of this acreage also ensures that prime farmland that should be farmed will be available for farming.

On Earth Day, in April 2003, I announced that two million acres had been reserved for the continuous signup program. I encourage all farmers and ranchers to visit their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to enroll filter strips, riparian buffers, grass waterways, and other practices that protect much larger acreage.

Also on Earth Day, I announced a new initiative to enhance wildlife habitats and air quality on up to 500,000 acres of new bottomland hardwood tree planting. Producers will be able to enroll soon at their county FSA office.

The FSA also works with State partners to address high priority resource concerns through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). There are 27 CREP agreements meeting community needs in such diverse locations as the Pacific Northwest, Mississippi River valley, Chesapeake Bay, New York City watershed, and Florida Everglades.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ann M. Veneman", is positioned above the printed name.

Ann M. Veneman
Secretary

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Background

First established by the Congress in 1985, the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has become the nation's premier program for protecting fragile natural resources and enhancing the environment for all of America.

A voluntary program, CRP offers annual rental payments for 10 to 15 years and cost-share assistance to eligible producers that establish long-term resource-conserving covers on eligible land to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat.



Eligibility Criteria

Eligible, land must be:

- L cropland that:
 - L has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the 6 years 1996 through 2001
 - L physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity; or
- L marginal pasture land.

Also, cropland must:

- L have a weighted average Erosion Index of 8 or greater;
- L be expiring CRP,
- L Water Bank Program acreage that expired in 2000, 2001, or 2002; or,
- L be located in a national or State CRP conservation priority area.



Annual Rental and Cost Share Payments

Base CRP rental rates do not exceed local dryland cash rental rates. Certain incentives, such as an incentive to perform certain maintenance obligations, may also apply.

Producers may offer land at that market rate or may offer a lower rental rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be acceptable. CRP cost share assistance is available to eligible participants in an amount not to exceed 50 percent of the eligible costs of establishing the approved practice.

Offered Acreage

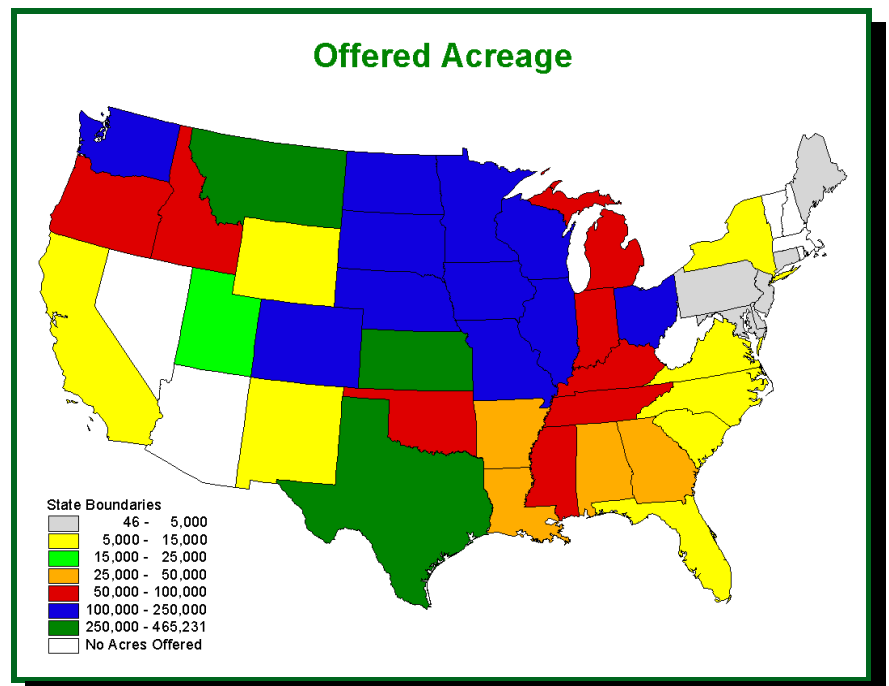
Signup 26 was announced by the Secretary on Earth Day (April 22, 2003) and was held from May 5, 2003, through June 13, 2003.

Offers were accepted only during that time period. For general signup only, offers are evaluated and ranked using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) based on the environmental benefits expected to accrue if the land is enrolled in the CRP. Use of the EBI ensures that only the most environmentally sensitive lands are selected and that all offers are considered fairly and equitably.

The EBI factors were:

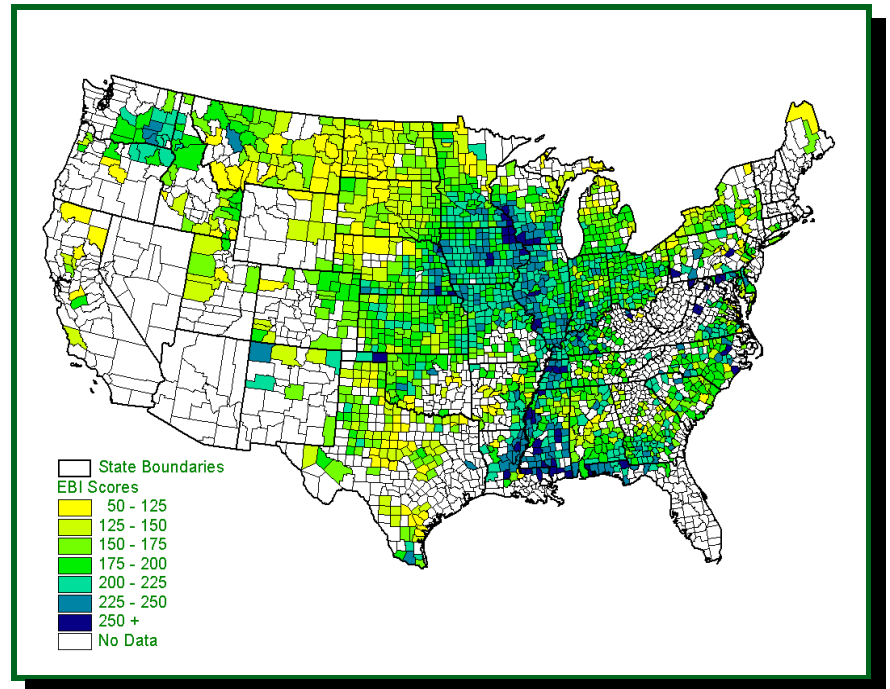
- 1) wildlife habitat benefits;
- 2) water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff, and leaching;
- 3) on-farm benefits of reduced erosion;
- 4) enduring benefits;
- 5) air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion; and
- 6) cost.

FSA received over 71,000 offers to enroll 4.1 million acres from these States:



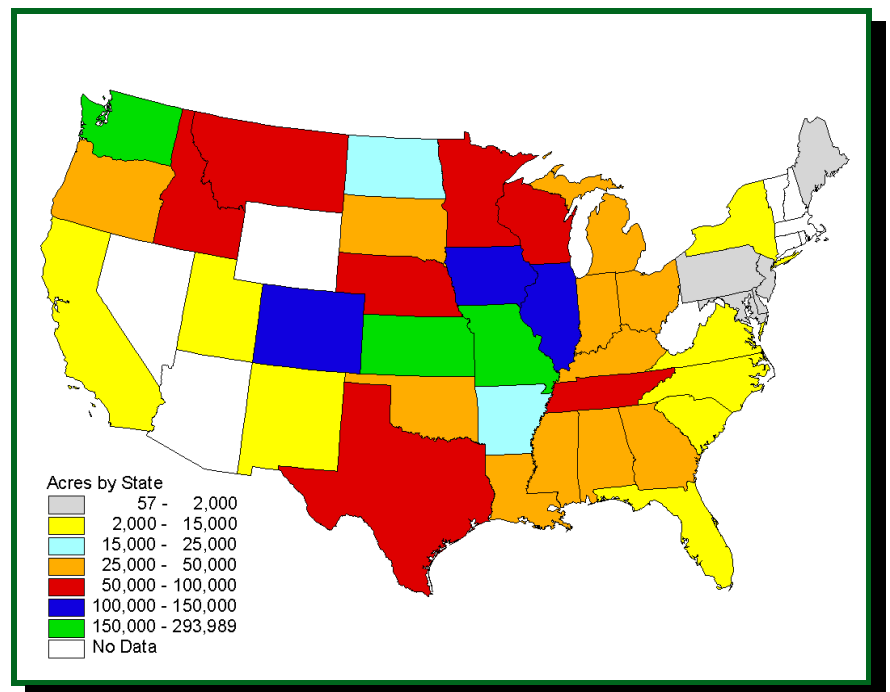
Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)

The county average environmental benefits index, without considering cost, for all offers was:



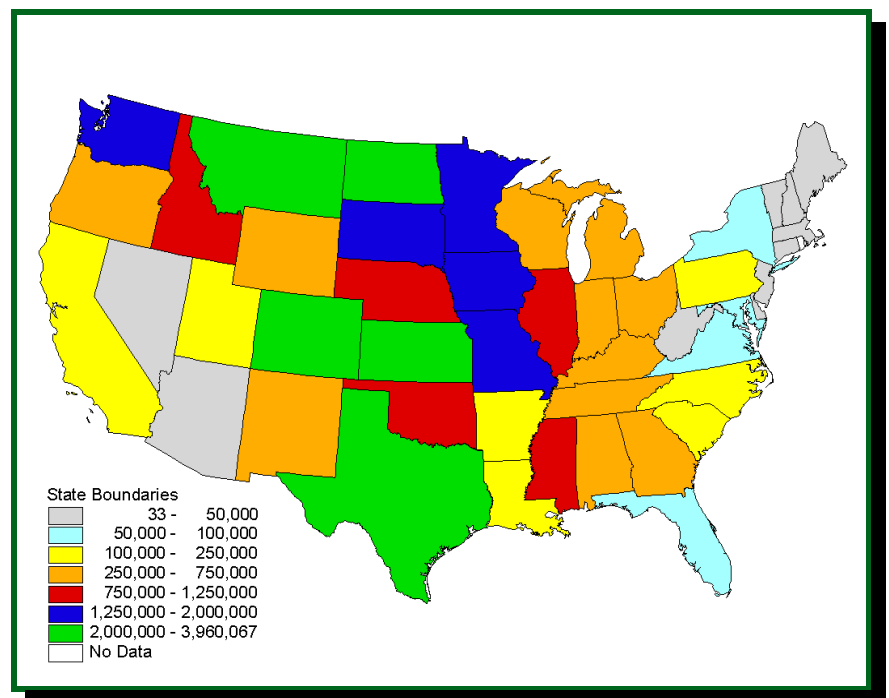
Acceptable Offers

About 2 million acres on over 38,000 offers were determined acceptable:



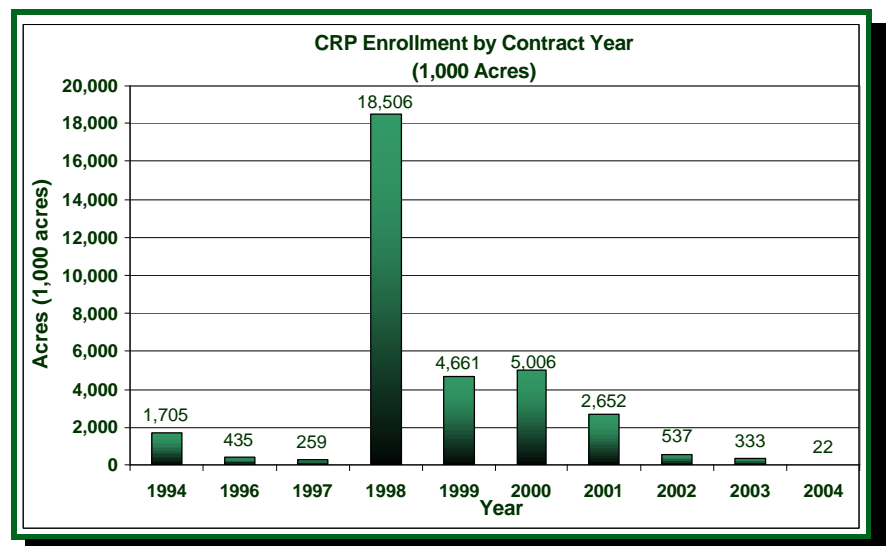
Acreage as of October 1, 2003

As of October 2003, there will be over 34 million acres enrolled in CRP:



Contract Expiration

Nationally, 619,932 contracts totaling approximately 34.1 million acres are currently enrolled in the CRP. The CRP statutory enrollment limitation is 39.2 million acres.



Other CRP Initiatives

Continuous CRP signup

Continuous signup provides an effective, ongoing means to enroll certain practices such as filter strips, riparian buffers, grass waterways, shelterbelts, field windbreaks, living snow fences, salt-tolerant vegetation, shallow water areas for wildlife, wetland restoration, and Wellhead Protection Areas on a continuous basis and to receive additional financial incentives.

Eligible land and contracts are approved on a non-competitive basis. There are currently 1.9 million acres enrolled under the program.



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP provides a framework for FSA to work closely with State, Tribal, and local governments and private groups, to address agriculture-related environmental issues.

Financial incentives encourage farmers and ranchers to enroll targeted lands to establish practices such as riparian buffers, grass filter strips, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmental and wildlife enhancement practices.

Enticements offered for enrollment include various Federal and State incentives, cost-share to establish the practice and annual rental payments.

CREP has bridged traditional administrative issues and established a common ground of respect, support, and pursuit of mutually beneficial goals.

The program serves as a new approach for cooperation in meeting environmental challenges.

There are 26 signed Memorandum of Agreements in 24 States and 1,393,310 acres committed to CREP with over 502,000 acres enrolled in the program.



The Farmable Wetland Program (FWP)

FWP includes a wetland and buffer practice that protects small wetlands. There are about 85,000 acres enrolled.



Summary Data

The attached tables provide detailed State-by-State summary data. Further information, including county-by-county summary data, is available on the FSA website at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation>

Table 1 - - Offers Received, Offers Accepted, CRP Acreage, and Rental Payments

State Name	Offers Received	Offers Accepted	Acres Offered	Acres Accepted	Acreage as of July 2003	Acreage Expiring Sept. 2003	Enrollment of Oct. 2003 ^{1/}	Total Rental Payments Oct. 2003 ^{2/} (\$1,000)
National	71,077	38,621	4,148,989	1,995,189	34,117,275	1,591,258	34,386,217	1,625,789
Alabama	974	645	42,597	27,198	482,170	29,199	479,482	21,689
Alaska	0	0	0	0	29,512	0	29,512	981
Arizona	0	0	0	0	33	0	33	0
Arkansas	635	426	38,002	24,015	170,824	16,464	177,638	7,939
California	46	14	13,574	4,496	143,032	3,123	144,405	4,387
Colorado	1,563	748	248,671	112,178	2,196,667	22,810	2,271,722	68,397
Connecticut	3	0	46	0	318	0	318	21
Delaware	4	3	92	57	7,228	0	7,285	728
Florida	221	208	9,514	8,772	86,427	6,035	89,144	3,241
Georgia	1,036	757	41,226	29,008	306,935	24,796	310,646	12,147
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	21	0	21	2
Idaho	738	515	83,479	56,072	790,776	56,830	789,096	30,853
Illinois	7,744	4,970	208,715	132,735	974,954	120,598	984,242	98,532
Indiana	2,770	1,493	74,476	38,333	297,271	57,208	277,752	25,992
Iowa	7,139	3,712	242,975	127,645	1,882,896	166,395	1,841,315	191,763
Kansas	6,625	4,179	465,231	293,989	2,659,745	59,276	2,851,081	103,065
Kentucky	1,487	1,052	52,154	36,650	316,021	20,568	331,253	23,001
Louisiana	569	527	39,320	37,196	204,173	6,243	233,481	9,068
Maine	63	10	1,978	246	24,111	849	23,508	1,210
Maryland	124	34	2,285	378	78,239	1,332	77,285	9,229
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	120	0	120	13
Michigan	3,001	1,234	99,079	41,562	310,231	91,593	259,986	21,282
Minnesota	4,428	2,379	155,798	79,451	1,713,829	63,725	1,726,392	99,530
Mississippi	1,267	882	63,959	44,928	898,458	42,387	900,218	36,751
Missouri	3,964	3,046	198,483	154,692	1,551,122	153,847	1,549,972	102,503
Montana	2,293	545	374,031	82,314	3,414,384	71,640	3,413,899	113,959
Nebraska	2,986	1,699	166,518	81,290	1,154,652	51,505	1,181,930	62,417
Nevada	0	0	0	0	151	0	151	3
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	197	0	197	8
New Jersey	16	10	642	539	2,273	62	2,750	120
New Mexico	22	13	5,043	2,941	594,268	1,260	594,262	18,648
New York	347	95	10,840	2,824	60,583	5,095	58,227	2,669
North Carolina	683	492	14,094	10,537	115,504	8,138	117,873	6,617
North Dakota	3,003	270	248,228	21,106	3,335,221	25,357	3,329,166	110,321
Ohio	3,167	1,514	102,285	49,132	300,626	78,312	271,071	24,892
Oklahoma	886	500	79,309	43,945	1,022,756	27,561	1,036,441	33,194
Oregon	330	262	59,187	46,359	457,366	10,369	488,831	21,588
Pennsylvania	64	29	1,991	1,185	132,586	2,695	131,076	9,520
Puerto Rico	0	0	0	0	671	0	671	60
South Carolina	258	138	7,693	3,617	217,736	8,470	212,670	7,686
South Dakota	2,202	334	178,982	29,593	1,435,618	23,521	1,440,844	58,215
Tennessee	1,560	1,267	63,312	53,213	248,898	25,963	273,059	13,754
Texas	3,154	789	415,377	93,232	4,032,285	164,598	3,960,067	142,424
Utah	92	37	16,520	3,659	198,889	1,772	200,591	6,053
Vermont	0	0	0	0	1,250	6	1,244	93
Virginia	234	154	5,252	3,567	57,635	2,942	58,084	2,932
Washington	1,390	1,021	207,456	153,464	1,286,315	56,916	1,355,277	67,057
West Virginia	0	0	0	0	1,762	8	1,754	94
Wisconsin	3,963	2,618	101,804	63,077	641,121	81,589	620,962	43,481
Wyoming	26	0	8,776	0	279,415	201	279,214	7,660

^{1/} Excludes 134,990 acres from Signup 26 with contracts starting in 2005, and continuous signup acres not yet recorded.

^{2/} Approximate payments not including adjustments for haying/grazing payment reductions and partial year continuous signup contracts.

Table 2 - - Description of Signup 26 Accepted Acres

State Name	Expiring Sept. 2003 (Acres)	New Lands 2004 Contracts	New Lands 2005 Contracts	Total New Lands (Acres)	Average Rental Payment (\$/Acre)*	Total Rental Payment (\$/year)	EBI without Cost*	EBI with Cost*
National	668,887	1,193,946	132,356	1,326,302	\$56.53	\$112,785,660	210	302
Alabama	12,547	14,146	506	14,651	48.71	1,324,737	203	303
Alaska	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Arkansas	4,656	18,622	737	19,359	48.07	1,154,333	209	306
California	455	4,042	0	4,042	20.98	94,322	170	290
Colorado	4,865	93,001	14,313	107,314	34.17	3,833,486	190	293
Connecticut	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Delaware	0	57	0	57	84.09	4,777	217	285
Florida	4,658	4,093	20	4,113	41.06	360,134	233	337
Georgia	7,546	20,961	501	21,462	45.37	1,316,146	206	304
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Idaho	32,611	22,557	904	23,461	48.08	2,695,897	195	295
Illinois	61,688	68,352	2,695	71,047	83.29	11,054,900	229	307
Indiana	19,994	18,147	191	18,338	79.28	3,038,879	219	299
Iowa	70,502	54,837	2,306	57,143	101.01	12,893,373	241	304
Kansas	29,552	221,143	43,294	264,437	41.34	12,153,082	202	301
Kentucky	11,134	24,730	786	25,516	71.87	2,633,978	227	305
Louisiana	4,061	31,490	1,645	33,135	54.40	2,023,285	234	324
Maine	112	134	0	134	36.41	8,953	171	284
Maryland	180	198	0	198	76.29	28,815	214	296
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Michigan	30,545	10,916	101	11,017	64.14	2,665,656	195	291
Minnesota	19,320	57,035	3,096	60,131	61.65	4,898,430	210	298
Mississippi	21,162	23,041	725	23,766	40.61	1,824,305	218	323
Missouri	93,157	59,568	1,966	61,534	67.31	10,411,647	214	302
Montana	14,954	56,201	11,159	67,359	34.79	2,863,440	185	289
Nebraska	24,315	54,472	2,504	56,976	60.88	4,949,338	217	305
Nevada	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
New Jersey	63	477	0	477	31.91	17,211	188	299
New Mexico	246	1,009	1,686	2,695	30.93	90,964	220	325
New York	1,045	1,694	85	1,779	37.64	106,266	193	296
North Carolina	4,831	5,676	30	5,706	47.35	498,927	202	302
North Dakota	2,298	17,026	1,782	18,808	29.39	620,397	174	283
Ohio	30,727	18,138	267	18,405	76.07	3,737,556	206	290
Oklahoma	8,016	33,235	2,694	35,929	37.42	1,644,327	196	298
Oregon	8,652	33,182	4,525	37,707	52.92	2,453,283	216	308
Pennsylvania	651	534	0	534	44.09	52,265	197	297
Puerto Rico	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
South Carolina	1,736	1,689	192	1,881	31.49	113,869	188	302
South Dakota	10,328	18,421	844	19,265	33.16	981,293	172	281
Tennessee	17,641	32,615	2,957	35,572	68.71	3,656,111	233	318
Texas	38,800	53,581	851	54,432	37.59	3,504,842	193	297
Utah	762	2,713	185	2,898	35.19	128,779	183	286
Vermont	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Virginia	1,157	2,234	176	2,410	41.69	148,702	209	312
Washington	38,665	87,245	27,555	114,799	56.30	8,639,289	216	309
West Virginia	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		
Wisconsin	35,260	26,738	1,078	27,817	65.95	4,159,667	218	310
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0.00	0		

* Average weighted by acres.

Table 3 - - Description of Signup 26 Accepted Acres

State Name	Average Erodibility (EI)	EI≥8 (Acres)	National Priority Area (Acres)	State Priority Area (Acres)	Rare and Declining Habitat (Acres)	Permanent Wildlife Habitat (Acres)	Longleaf Pines (Acres)
National	17	1,553,502	316,328	1,061,548	341,556	102,594	35,492
Alabama	17	24,386	6,402	4,910	0	34	6,312
Alaska		0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona		0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	16	11,397	0	17,271	0	124	138
California	15	4,420	0	620	0	5	0
Colorado	15	110,973	0	53,088	73	37,768	0
Connecticut		0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	14	49	57	0	0	0	0
Florida	9	4,805	3,603	0	0	3	3,171
Georgia	8	12,438	18,786	5,114	0	86	18,768
Hawaii		0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	35	55,335	0	11,000	0	2,301	0
Illinois	21	122,409	0	87,673	500	7,033	67
Indiana	17	26,894	12,830	14,899	22	3,317	24
Iowa	25	118,824	18,421	63,566	23,396	3,536	37
Kansas	10	177,926	0	221,950	154,870	86	0
Kentucky	30	34,868	0	20,747	7,142	47	39
Louisiana	8	18,424	43	32,643	0	52	959
Maine	26	229	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	12	212	378	0	0	90	0
Massachusetts		0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	7	12,995	41,562	0	28	968	2
Minnesota	8	23,134	65,811	13,218	49,571	1,497	68
Mississippi	19	30,705	372	15,582	0	99	585
Missouri	27	148,958	0	86,905	30,544	1,901	20
Montana	15	80,596	60,068	11,634	31,437	180	0
Nebraska	14	69,217	0	60,502	30,986	732	6
Nevada		0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire		0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	20	539	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	24	2,941	0	2,290	0	1,164	0
New York	19	2,795	2,684	0	0	31	0
North Carolina	16	7,027	3,451	5,027	0	356	3,585
North Dakota	11	17,348	18,781	129	0	7,373	0
Ohio	10	21,399	32,611	12,435	0	24,609	15
Oklahoma	9	26,963	0	34,153	8,568	212	0
Oregon	21	44,582	0	45,207	0	4	0
Pennsylvania	16	1,121	738	403	0	1	0
Puerto Rico		0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	12	2,001	1,277	117	0	2	1,361
South Dakota	12	24,402	7,556	12,327	1,621	1,674	0
Tennessee	31	51,356	0	40,202	0	559	0
Texas	14	86,499	0	73,823	0	4,695	0
Utah	12	3,573	0	3,235	0	0	0
Vermont		0	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	17	3,421	2,524	1,556	0	192	120
Washington	21	118,007	0	89,737	0	1,312	0
West Virginia		0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	24	50,336	18,375	19,586	2,798	554	217
Wyoming		0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4 - - Description of Signup 26 Accepted Acres

State Name	New Introduced Grass	New Native Grass	Existing Grass	Total Grass	New Hardwood Trees	New Softwood Trees	Existing Trees	Total Trees
National	225,501	600,947	489,097	1,315,545	120,486	34,783	70,680	225,948
Alabama	63	22	4,973	5,058	7,559	6,818	7,610	21,987
Alaska	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	3,359	2,037	1,107	6,503	11,710	807	4,750	17,267
California	297	0	4,188	4,484	0	2	0	2
Colorado	1,497	67,320	5,478	74,295	0	0	0	0
Connecticut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	25	23	0	49	8	0	0	8
Florida	61	0	378	440	3,171	421	4,690	8,283
Georgia	0	21	95	116	18,986	2,255	7,284	28,525
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	9,333	11,338	31,158	51,829	3	1,166	752	1,921
Illinois	49,449	9,403	52,406	111,259	9,598	52	2,405	12,054
Indiana	9,655	5,719	13,259	28,633	3,921	49	1,858	5,828
Iowa	15,925	32,198	48,253	96,376	2,253	47	1,490	3,790
Kansas	427	121,646	16,456	138,529	58	0	17	74
Kentucky	17,825	8,355	1,342	27,521	1,185	38	201	1,424
Louisiana	14	1,139	640	1,792	28,934	2,957	2,994	34,884
Maine	47	0	199	246	0	0	0	0
Maryland	58	61	55	174	12	28	73	112
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	7,645	6,327	23,888	37,860	686	731	903	2,320
Minnesota	3,256	10,257	7,402	20,915	4,543	510	2,123	7,176
Mississippi	404	92	4,498	4,993	10,746	10,907	17,996	39,649
Missouri	29,600	14,056	75,061	118,717	677	0	1,677	2,353
Montana	17,841	21,159	11,243	50,242	0	0	13	13
Nebraska	598	35,145	13,191	48,933	97	5	280	382
Nevada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	139	18	341	498	5	0	22	27
New Mexico	480	1,051	246	1,777	0	0	0	0
New York	393	102	1,828	2,323	280	4	173	457
North Carolina	554	342	1,610	2,506	3,659	1,053	2,956	7,669
North Dakota	4,879	2,918	5,732	13,529	0	0	97	97
Ohio	5,076	5,781	10,733	21,589	1,652	299	738	2,688
Oklahoma	61	26,062	8,723	34,846	189	0	2	191
Oregon	16,722	21,540	7,917	46,179	0	112	64	176
Pennsylvania	213	29	738	981	0	0	204	204
Puerto Rico	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	3	0	167	170	1,361	456	1,624	3,441
South Dakota	3,838	8,250	13,688	25,776	15	0	189	204
Tennessee	5,932	25,887	14,710	46,528	1,058	3,783	1,079	5,920
Texas	678	52,166	35,517	88,360	0	0	73	73
Utah	1,284	1,563	813	3,659	0	0	0	0
Vermont	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	259	260	996	1,515	163	1,139	559	1,860
Washington	11,334	103,933	36,586	151,854	0	52	190	243
West Virginia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	6,281	4,727	33,485	44,493	7,959	1,092	5,594	14,645
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0